



HEACS' Report: Report and recommendations on the infrastructure of the historic environment¹

Paper outlining the initial comments and a preliminary view by BEFS Board

The Board of Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) welcomes the recognition paid to its work in the HEACS Report. We are keen to make a full contribution to the debate that the recommendations in the report are bound to trigger. This initial commentary on HEACS' central recommendation about the need for enhanced intermediary services is intended to indicate the Board's preliminary view as part of the process of consulting our members.

Increase support for intermediary: We welcome the fact that HEACS has highlighted the need for greater support, at intermediary level, for the historic environment sector. BEFS is in fact already acting as the intermediary for the historic environment in the terms of the HEACS report although the extent of our services is limited by our resources and funding. BEFS' origins lie in a wish by its members to develop this intermediary role for the built environment sector as a whole and it continues to enjoy strong support from members for developing this strategic approach. BEFS recognises the need for greater capacity to provide a full range of intermediary services and one of our development priorities is to increase resources in order to recruit additional policy staff. As a first step, in response to the HEACS recommendation, we propose that BEFS should focus its attention on the historic environment sector with the next step being to extend this support to enable more comprehensive engagement across the entire built environment sector, at local as well as national level.

Historic Environment in wider context: The HEACS Report highlights in a number of places the need to link historic environment issues to wider policy areas - *'One of the most important challenges facing the historic environment sector is to identify policy priorities of the Scottish Government which it is helping to deliver beyond the immediate corporate objectives of Historic Scotland'*. This is consistent with the BEFS model of working which provides opportunities for historic environment issues to be addressed in a broader context which focuses on improving Scotland's places. *'HEACS believes that the national intermediary body for the historic environment sector would be a platform from which to engage with issues around new design, sustainable development and the management of change'*. This aligns precisely with the remit of BEFS. Our view is that the most effective way to achieve the cross-cutting development of policies and practices is to tackle the issues and opportunities from a membership base that is broadly representative of both the historic and contemporary built environment.

¹ Report and recommendations on the infrastructure of the historic environment, December 2008, HEACS

Other issues: The report raises a range of other important issues for the sector such as: leadership and prioritising of issues, capacity building, effective representation, Voluntary Sector Compact requirements and how these are applied in relation to the historic environment sector, and the recommendation that HEACS funds should not be lost to the sector. We are broadly supportive of these and believe they are best taken forward in the context of being capable and credible as a representative voice of organisations engaged across the built environment as a whole. Many organisations which we represent now and expect to represent in the future hold interests in both pre 1918 and post 1918 buildings and urban planning issues that do not have boundaries relating to age.

BEFS Board Preliminary View: The founding members established BEFS under Memorandum and Articles of Association with charitable objects that are '*concerned with the management, protection, conservation and enhancement of Scotland's entire built environment*'. Members continue to actively support these objects and the Board is not aware that there is a desire amongst members for a change in its objects. As presently constituted BEFS is the Scottish intermediary for the entire built environment including the historic environment. The analysis by HEACS that there is a need for sufficient and sustainable funding for the work of the intermediary is supported by BEFS Board. However, it does not follow that BEFS should give up part of its role and adopt a remit restricted to the historic environment. Such a restricted remit is not in the Board's view a direction of travel that our members would support and neither would such a strategy enhance the value to Scotland of its historic environment.